Think carefully about the issue presented in the following excerpt and the assignment below.

It is often observed that some sense of unease or dissatisfaction with oneself or one's circumstances, some self-criticism, is absolutely necessary for people to move forward and make any kind of progress or change. But optimism—a feeling of confidence that one's actions will be successful and will pay off in the future—is even more important. If people are not optimistic, what motivation will they have to change?

Adapted from Richard B. McKenzie, *The Paradox of Progress*

**Assignment:** Are optimistic, confident people more likely than others to make changes in their lives? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your point of view on this issue. Support your position with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Use this space to plan: